



Saguaro National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK OPENS HOPE CAMP TRAIL TO BICYCLE USE ON NOVEMBER 2

Tucson, AZ – Starting this weekend, the Hope Camp Trail in Saguaro National Park's Rincon Mountain District (east) will be open to mountain bikes. Designation of this new multiple-use trail begins November 2, 2012 after a long eight month process of public comment, approval and inclusion in the Federal Register.

"The public comments were overwhelmingly in favor of making this a multiple-use trail," according to Darla Sidles, Superintendent of Saguaro National Park. "It is one more way we can connect with our Tucson community and encourage a healthy activity in their national park".

The Hope Camp Trail is a 2.8 mile long trail that originates at the Camino Loma Alta Trailhead, and travels east through the southwestern portion of the Park's Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) to the park's boundary approximately .2 miles south of Hope Camp. Beyond Hope Camp, the trail connects the Arizona Trail and continues south into the Rincon Valley. It is expected that the Hope Camp Trail will complete a popular bicycle loop on the east side of Tucson. The Arizona Trail, via the Quilter Trail, into National Park Service Wilderness is not open to bicycles.

The Hope Camp Trail lies on lands acquired by the NPS in the 1990's. Prior to being included in Saguaro National Park, the land was part of a privately-owned ranch, and the trail was a graded dirt road used to support ranching operations.

In 2009 Saguaro National Park completed a Comprehensive Trails Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. That plan's selected alternative called for the conversion of the Hope Camp Trail to a multi-use trail, including bicycling. The route is not within potential, proposed, suitable, recommended or designated wilderness. The official rule is necessary because NPS requires promulgation of a special regulation in the Federal Register to designate bicycle routes located off park roads and outside developed areas.

For further information, please contact Paul Austin, the park's Chief Ranger, at (520) 733-5111.

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